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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE, PA

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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY'S LEADERS, PRESS REACT TO LONDON ATTACKS

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SUMMARY  
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1. Senior Turkish officials were quick to condemn last week's terrorist bombings in London. Most press commentators also condemned the attack, though many blamed the US-led war in Iraq for accelerating the spread of terrorism. Some journalists also pointed to an alleged double standard by Western (principally EU) countries, in which PKK terrorism is taken less seriously than acts carried out by al-Qaeda. Several fringe commentators in the Islamist and nationalist press blamed the United States, the CIA, or "secret forces" for the attack. End Summary.

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TURKISH MFA CONDEMNS BOMBINGS  
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2. On the afternoon of the bombings, the Turkish Foreign Ministry issued the following written statement:

Begin text. We learned with great sadness of the loss of life, injuries, and material damage resulting from the simultaneous terrorist attacks at 6 metro stations in London today (July 7). Turkey, which has paid the price of terrorism for many years and has lost tens of thousands of its citizens to terrorism, strongly opposes all kinds of terrorism, no matter what its aim or who carries it out, and strongly condemns these acts. These attacks have once again highlighted the need for effective cooperation and struggle against terrorism within a determined international plan. Our hope is that those who committed these inhuman acts will be speedily apprehended and brought to justice. We share as a nation the pain of our ally, the British people. We express our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in these attacks, and wish a rapid recovery for those who were wounded. End text.

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ERDOGAN, GUL COMMENTS  
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3. FM Gul was visiting his home province of Kayseri when the attacks took place. He made the following statements during the course of the day: "Turkey is in continuous cooperation against all kinds of terrorism, because Turkey is one of the countries that has suffered the most from terrorism. When in the past we tried to explain the magnitude of the threat of terrorism, the world did not show sufficient interest. But after the events of September 11, the world understood how dangerous terrorism can be. Now there is great cooperation on this issue all around the world. We hope that in cooperating in the struggle against terrorism, differentiation will not be shown. Because when a distinction is made between 'my terrorist' and 'their terrorist,' it is not possible for the struggle against terrorism to be successful. From this standpoint, everyone must cooperate in the struggle against terrorism without any discrimination. We are following closely the events in Great Britain. We strongly condemn all forms of terrorism."

4. PM Erdogan was in the United States at the Sun Valley Conference on July 7. The Prime Minister made the following statement concerning the bombings: "British authorities say the bomb attacks were against the whole of humanity and all civilizations, and they show a calm determination against terrorism. This is our common problem. We cannot target one religion or one country and accuse them. It would be wrong to say that this or that terrorist organization is responsible for this attack before getting clear evidence. This is the aim of terrorism, to be able to spread propaganda. As politicians, we should not be a tool of this effort."

5. Speaking the following day at the World Affairs Council in San Francisco, Erdogan expanded on his previous remarks: "This is not something I am saying only now. I began to talk about terrorism when our party was first established. We had been experiencing terrorism well before September 11. Since 1978, we have lost over 40,000 lives to terror. I believe

there is no other such example in the world. Terror has no religion, nationality, ethnicity, or homeland. We do not know when, why, and where terror may strike. Just last week, Turkey lost six soldiers in a mine attack on a train in eastern Turkey. The same terror hit London after New York, Istanbul, and Madrid. As Turks, we condemn the vicious bombing incidents in London. Terror has no boundaries. The United States or Spain or Turkey cannot deal with terrorism alone. There must be serious cooperation in the fight against terror. If we use a portion of the 900 billion USD spent each year in buying weapons on the elimination of poverty and ignorance, would we not be able to end terrorism? The U.S. must be the leading country in helping the poor and the uneducated."

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COMMENTATORS CONDEMN ACTS -- WITH CAVEATS  
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16. Commentators in the mainstream Turkish press roundly condemned the London attacks, though many were quick to claim that the US-led actions in Iraq had contributed to an atmosphere in which terrorism is spreading. Others accused the West - and especially the Europeans - of ignoring (or even supporting) PKK terrorism while seeking international support against Islamist extremism. Several examples follow:

-- Taha Akyol, in the mainstream daily "Milliyet" (July 9): "Terrorism is a contagious insanity of our age, and it is therefore difficult to wage war against it. Nobody can guess where the next attack will be carried out. Police and intelligence services must remain vigilant at all times. Democracy must be allowed to flourish to dispel the feeling of being oppressed. Economies must grow to eliminate the feeling of being exploited. Education must be improved to broaden people's horizons. Terrorist attacks in London and the terror campaign of the PKK must be condemned with the same vigor. Terrorism must be crushed wherever it appears."

-- Ismet Berkan, in the liberal daily "Radikal" (July 8): "Unfortunately, we saw yesterday that terrorism silences or suppresses all other voices when it starts to speak its barbaric language. This is the primary objective, and we should admit that al-Qaeda has been successful in achieving that goal. What really matters now is not to yield to terror. We should not compromise our freedoms and our lifestyle. We must continue to make efforts to eliminate the social conditions that give rise to organizations like al-Qaeda."

-- Melih Asik, in the mainstream daily "Milliyet" (July 8): "The civilians killed in London can be regarded as victims of the war on terror. In fact, they are victims of a campaign of horror and exploitation being carried out in the name of the struggle against terror. I hope that before condemning terrorism the British will remember what their own government has done in Iraq."

-- Oktay Eksi, in the mainstream daily "Hurriyet" (July 8): "I don't know whether there is any lesson to be taken from the London events for a country like Turkey, which has a long experience of terrorism. But we have the right to expect that the selfish ones in Europe who think that 'another person's terrorism is his problem' will learn something here. I am especially thinking of countries that are protecting people they know are terrorists - Belgium, Greece, France, and Germany."

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EXTREMISTS JUSTIFY, HINT AT OTHER FORCES  
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17. A relatively small number of Turkish commentators in Islamist-oriented and extreme nationalist press outlets hinted that other forces were behind the London attacks. Selected excerpts follow:

-- Ibrahim Karagul in the Islamist-oriented, pro-Government "Yeni Safak" (July 8): "Will somebody claim responsibility? Al-Qaeda will, of course, or else some organization we have never heard of before. Maybe some people involved in the attacks will even be caught. But then we will learn nothing further. We will never find out what was learned in the investigation. We will never learn who it was that was directing these people. Isn't that what happened in Indonesia and in Spain? Al-Qaeda claims responsibility, and the issue drops off the agenda. But it is not realistic to blame all terror attacks on al-Qaeda or similar groups. In fact, there is no such thing as al-Qaeda. There is an al-Qaeda philosophy, and certain forces are putting their own al-Qaedas into play."

-- Mahir Kaynak in the Islamist-oriented "Zaman" (July 11): "Who is the power that is lighting the fuse of clashes that will reshape the world and establish a new world order? You can believe that it is al-Qaeda. You can believe that the most exaggerated myths about this organization are true. Or

you can think that this is all quite insulting, and look for yourself for what the truth might be. It is impossible to find supporters of al-Qaeda anywhere in the world. But there are leaders of globalization and their opponents, and this is the model that explains the incidents in London. The UK, which had become the base of operations for global capital, had succeeded in maintaining a low profile despite being the second most significant power in Iraq and playing an active role in the Islamic world, which has been chosen as a vehicle for conflict. The attacks in London have served to lift the veil on the UK position in this conflict."

-- Seyfi Sahin in the nationalist daily "Ortadogu" (July 11): "There is no organization that aids the United States, which wants to lay claim to resources around the world, more than al-Qaeda. The United States has come upon a very effective tactic for silencing Islam and invading Islamic countries. Al-Qaeda has opened the way for the United States. I have no doubt that the CIA, which trained Osama Bin-Laden, has been getting excellent service from him. The CIA should be congratulated."

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